

A shared illusion

Borders, money, laws and human rights only exist if people believe in them. The shared illusion of countries, governments or businesses may also be viewed simply as groups of people acting in either their own interest, or that of their 'organisation'. This organisation of people may or may not be acting in the 'public interest' or the perceived benefit of the whole world.

Why now for a referendum?

I don't trust most politicians, who I sense are often influenced more by groups of people acting in a self-interest, under a brand or business name than those people they claim to represent. By using politicians as tools, groups of people can manipulate politicians around the world, using all the 'legal' forces they can muster (from trade agreements to guided missiles, guided occasionally by the Geneva convention).

I find this a helpful way to try to comprehend the current referendum – asking who is acting in who's interests and why?

Why are we really having a referendum? If those in power cared what the British public wanted, why didn't they ask before we joined? Why now?

Where's the money coming from?

Let's start with some facts to frame this discussion. The UK is the [biggest financial centre on earth](#). Thus the biggest economic force of power in the UK is the 'financial services industry'. To imagine it has no influence on politics and the media isn't even naive, it's dangerous. Over the years many people have formed the financial sector into a kind of city state, with huge powers (the City of London Corporation's key role is '[supporting the financial services industry](#)').

The EU represents financial regulation

While publicly, those representing the City have been [ambivalent](#) to the EU, there is clear vitriol against proposed regulation and other models such as 'The Robin Hood Tax', with some commentators seeing the City '[under siege](#)' from the EU which seeks to '[control and manipulate](#)' this financial centre. The commentator suggests that EU to many in that sector represents a threat to their self interest in the form of regulation. The Robin Hood Tax, or 'financial transaction taxes' (FTT) was attacked by the City of London Corporation. They stated the likely '[impact of the FTT on household savings is expected to be large](#)', suggesting it would destabilise things like pension funds and risk people being able to save for 'planned large expenses such as, for example, education, building a cushion to be able to deal with large unexpected outlays such as for special health care', failing to mention that all of these things could be directly provided by a fairer spread of wealth and could be subsidised by the

taxes raised by such a system. Naturally, the biggest threat of this kind of regulation is to those who stand to transfer their wealth to governments.

The UK is the money laundering capitol of the world

Let's quickly deconstruct the word 'regulation'. For a country that rightly prides itself on exporting the rule of law, dating back to the Magna Carta, we have a strange doublethink attitude to 'regulation' in a free market that has permitted a rotten heart of ['systematic fraud'](#) and corruption. The UK's National Crime Agency states that ['hundreds of billions of US dollars of criminal money almost certainly continue to be laundered through UK banks'](#). These financial services appear powerful enough to arguably be accountable only to people expressing their desires and power through a free-market, rather than to any democratic system. The financial industry in the UK perpetuates according to a kind of moral fallacy used to justify corruption, in that [it might as well be 'us'](#) skimming off the top, rather than 'them' (for example, New York, Paris or Hong Kong). Rather than lead by example let the UK wait for the imaginary date the financial services will agree to global regulation. Precisely because the UK financial centre is not regulated as tightly as the conscience of a significant number of the public would desire (say for example, to stop [facilitating money laundering by people involved in activities labelled as organised crime and terrorism](#)), our financial centre is able to outcompete more regulated markets.

So what does this have to do with a referendum? Naturally - these financial powers interface directly with ruling politicians.

Money buys political power on both sides of the debate

The current group of ruling politicians form themselves into a 'party' which can't seem to decide whether there would be more or less financial incentives (including bribes) staying in the EU. There are groups of people lobbying on behalf of considerable amounts of 'wealth' on both sides of the debate and it's not clear to them which the most self-interested path is. Rather than risk spoiling their party, which seems to work well for most members, they seem to have decided to use the referendum as a tool to both keep their party united and hopefully silence a growing and noisy party centred on UK 'independence' (wouldn't it be interesting to hear from people from a 'UK interdependence party') which is weakening their control. This vote, they perhaps hope, will silence that party. The opposition party is in disarray, with the leader openly anti-EU yet formally campaigning for it to bind the party around a common cause no one quite seems to comprehend in a world where the actual 'labour' and toil is mostly done off-shore.

The probable conclusion of the more prominent members of the current ruling party is that if they use the referendum as a bargaining chip, they might win more in negotiations with others who represent countries in the EU, such as perhaps not regulating people working in finance too tightly.

The gamble backfires?

However, it seems the plan may be backfiring as people motivated by self interest are expertly using demagoguery, crafting words to stir up ancient and innate fears of 'the other', helping perpetuate the illusion that because the UK is an island nation, it can chose to exist independently. What does independent even mean in this context? Air pollution, fish stocks and desperate human beings are but a few things that do not share in the illusion of borders. In every sense, all life on this earth is interdependent. This is fact has been competently recognised for centuries by trade organisations of merchants (such as the Dutch and British East India Companies), redefining sovereignty as something beyond mere nation-states – arguably creating a financial incentive for peace, not war. Recent trade agreements such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership arguably '[endanger the sovereignty of the signatory states](#)' far more than a bloc of nations such as the EU ever could (Dan Carlin explains this wonderfully in [this podcast](#)).

When you vote – is it in fear, or hope?

Whatever you chose to vote, just ask yourself in whose interests are you acting? Which illusions are you choosing to share in? What are your outcome measures of success? Is it a pure financial outcome, a stream of numbers forgotten to history but remembered in your personal bank account? Is it the number of desperate children seeking shelter and 'asylum' rescued or the number turned away and washed-up on beaches? Is it the faded-flag of an idea of nationhood, straining to stay relevant in a digitally dominated world where people increasingly identify more as '[global citizens](#)' – national rivalries seeming as ridiculous as Yorkshire Vs Lancashire. If nations are doomed to evolve or dissolve this also begs the important question about what exactly will emerge instead, and who will be the next big customer of our arms dealers, and to who will they be accountable?

This is how to vote

Are you being honest with yourself about why you are voting? Are you hiding behind other people's clumsy lies or fears. Do you question everything you are told with your heart as well as your head – with full knowledge – conscience? Are your own fears or hopes a tool for being used by someone else or are you happy in your personal illusion, your shared illusion, accountable to it?

What ever way this vote goes, I want to share in the illusion that people were capable of voting beyond a self-interest, voting with their conscience and dreaming a better world into reality, born not of fear, but hope.

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